

THE FARMERS' CONVENTION.

Organized Farmers Meet at St. Louis, and Unite Under the Name of the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union.

Special Correspondence to Kansas Farmer.

St. Louis, Mo., December 7, 1889.

To-day closed the most important meeting of organized farmers and labor interests that ever assembled in America. The delegates representing the Farmers' and Laborers' Union of America met Tuesday, at 10 o'clock a. m., at Entertainment hall in the Exposition building, and the representatives of the National Farmers' Alliance held their convention in the spacious parlors of the Planters' House.

On Wednesday evening the committee representing the Knights of Labor, consisting of Grand Master Workman T. V. Powderly, Ralph Beaumont, chairman of the National Legislative committee of that order, and A. W. Wright, of Toronto, Canada, held an enthusiastic meeting at Central Turner hall, where the representatives of the two farmers' organizations and the National Mutual Benefit Association—an organization whose objects and aims are similar to that of the other two farmers' organizations—met to interchange ideas pertaining to the conditions and wants of the farmers and wage-workers of the country. It soon became apparent from the sentiment expressed that the conditions of which the people complained had grown, in a great measure, out of special and class legislation, and that to secure a righting thereof it demanded a conservative though united action of the people. Mr. Powderly, in order that he might not be misunderstood, referred to a short-hand report from his speech delivered at Atlanta, Ga., a few weeks ago, before the national meeting of the Knights of Labor:

"You have seen the lurid reports that went broadcast concerning our order, and may not have placed the proper construction upon them. We were powerful, in numbers only, and our enemies—your enemies—took alarm. The truth would not serve their purposes, and every act of ours was colored with the hue of falsehood and flashed across the continent and under the sea, until devout, respectable men, whose interests were linked with ours, feared to know us even, lest the knowledge would bring contamination with it. Your order is traveling in the same direction, and when that day dawns upon us and the fire opens up on your lines, as it has on ours, you will find us arrayed with you as one the battalions of production in the ranks of that grand army of toil which will know no trade line or sectional differences. I believe I but echo the sentiments of my brother officers when I say to you that I am willing to lay down the reins of office, to lay down the gavel as General Master Workman of the Knights of Labor, to pick up the weapon of the private soldier and take my place in the ranks of the army of organized producers of America. It would, indeed be a proud day to witness the fulfillment of a life-long wish, and stand or fall under the banner which our united orders could fling to the breeze against oppression and injustice—against the storm of wrong that has become tornado-like in its violence."

"This, I hope," said Mr. Powderly, "clearly defines my position."

Mr. Powderly, when asked if a federation was formed it must necessarily be political, replied: "Only to a degree. Our results can be accomplished by a united adherence to principle, and all candidates for law making offices—I mean legislators, Congressmen, Senators, and yes, I mean the judiciary—must conform to them or invite political death. We are told that we must not meddle in politics; we must not interfere in the besmirching occupation of selecting those who are to govern the affairs of the country. Who tells us to keep out of

politics? The politician. Who warns us against taking a hand in looking after politicians? Why, the politician, of course; and it is because we have feared to make an effort to purify politics that politicians have had it all their own way to the detriment of the masses. If politics are so bad, why do politicians stick to them? and if it is good for them to be politicians, why should it be bad for us? We must meddle in politics more than we have in the past, but exactly how I am not prepared to say."

"But do you favor the formation of a producers' party—a national party with some such name as 'Producers,' or 'Tillers and Toilers'?"

"I can only reply to that question as I did a similar question asked me at Atlanta by a member of the Farmers' Alliance. I hope to see our two orders united on some line of political action that will insure to the producer more of reward for labor done. I do not think it would be wise to form a party out of our organizations, for that would necessarily require the abandonment of such features as do not pertain to politics, and great harm would be done; but that an organization we must study the science of politics and apply the lesson or continue to suffer the wrongs we endure as as certain as fate."

"But a party and politicians would seem to be inseparable?"

"The question is a proposition, subject to discussion. I can say to an assemblage of Knights of Labor, and to any of the great farmer organizations, we must become politicians, not as partisans, but as foes to partisanship and the system of spoliation that has enabled partisanship to turn the government of the people over to the management of the Shylocks and usurers of Wall street and Lombard street. After hearing the expositions of the aims of their orders, I know they are right. I know we are right; and, while two wrongs never make a right, two such great rights as we represent together can, if actuated by one impulse, undo the wrongs we have complained of so long."

Nemaha County.

J. F. Rahlen, County organizer of Nemaha County sends us the following reports for this week:

Summit Alliance near Oneida on Dec. 16th with 24 Initiates.
President G. C. Sanford, Oneida Kas.
Secretary E. H. Myers, " "
Lecturer G. L. Myers, " "
Wetmore Alliance Dec. 17. Wetmore, Kans. No of Initiates nine.
President H. C. Riggs, Wetmore Kas.
Secretary J. S. Kenoyer, " "
Lecturer E. Randall, " "

J. F. Rahlen County organizer, Nemaha County.

Under the able and efficient management of an able and well selected corps of organizers the counties of the state are rapidly falling into line. Douglas is coming to the front under the personal supervision of the State Lecturer A. E. Dickinson; and now we hear from Nemaha which is being rapidly organized by J. F. Rahlen who has charge of the work in that county. We received a very pleasant call from that gentleman on Saturday last while here for the purpose of obtaining the new work. He reports several recent organizations, and several appointments ahead for more. He says the people are wide awake and ready for this great work.

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